No. 22. 74

An Exhortation to Youth to prepare for Judgment.

A

SERMON

Occasion'd by the Late

REPENTANCE

AND

FUNERAL

OF

A Young Man,

Deceased *September* 29. 1681.

ECCLES. I. 12.

Remember now thy Creator, in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

LONDON:

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7.52.1

TO

John Bawdon Esq;

SIR,

IF either the Preaching or publiſhing of the following Sermon, may be any way uſeful to promote the great deſign of doing good; if the ſeriouſneſs of the Subject, or the weight of the Inſtance that gave occaſion to it, may awaken any one Soul to prepare for his final judgment: I know you will heartily rejoyce and bleſs God with me; and as readily pardon my defects in the management of ſo important a Theme: and the rather, ſince I indeavoured only to convince and perſwade an attentive Auditory, (conſiſting moſtly of young perſons) without the leaſt intention of appearing in Print; as knowing very well, that what may be acceptable to a Chriſtian ear, when pronounc'd from the Pulpit, doth often fail of being ſo, when perus'd afterwards by a critical eye. However, the Impreſſion once conſented to, I ought to addreſs it to no other name

but yours; *being Conceiv'd and Born in your Houſe, as well as Preacht in your hearing; eſpecially, when 'twas proper for me to prefix an example of the Connexion between ſeriouſneſs and chearfulneſs. For having diſcours'd ſomewhat concerning the* Mirth *and* Joy *of a Chriſtian Life, as well as of the unreaſonableneſs and vanity of ſenſual pleaſures; it ſeem'd neceſſary to confirm that Truth by a lively Inſtance: And were there nothing elſe to recommend the practice of Godlineſs, but that tranquillity and peace of mind, that calmneſs and ſerenity of ſpirit which follows a good Conſcience, and is the only true ground of a chearful converſation; the argument were very preſſing. But I need not mention this, ſave to let you ſee the excellency of your choice, and thereby incourage others to make the ſame. And none, Sir, that underſtand my obligations* to you *and* to your excellent Lady, *will judge me guilty of the uſual flattery incident to ſuch Dedications; if I take this firſt opportunity to avow my Debt of Gratitude and Honour to you both. And ſuch I muſt profeſs it, as is exceeded only by the Duty owing from Children to their* natural Parents; *my loſs of whom, your reſpects and kindneſs have in great meaſure undeſervedly ſupplied.*

I have

I have only to add, that as the mention of your Name *will doubtleſs invite many to read the* Sermon, *who would otherwiſe be apt to throw it by; ſo, I am told, I ſhall loſe other Readers, by concealing* that *of the perſon, on whoſe account* it *was Preacht. To which I have this to ſay, that his name and quality, his life and Converſation, the circumſtances of his ſickneſs, and his temper and expreſſions on his deathbed, are ſufficiently known, to obviate the leaſt inſinuation of a Forgery, as to what I have related concerning him. And as to what I have not recited, the Readers benefit would be as unconcern'd in the publication, as his curioſity is like to be diſſatisfied, if he expect any other Reaſon of its concealment.*

I am,

Honoured Sir,

Your moſt Affectionate,

Moſt obliged,

Humble Servant,

JOHN SHOWER.

TO THE READER.

WE reckon it a piece of juſtice to the Author of this Sermon, to believe, and (according to that belief) to teſtify, that the occaſion it ſelf did againſt his own inclination extort from him the publication of it.

For when the conflict was only between the Modeſty due (indeed) to his years on the one hand, and ſence of Duty on the other (upon the concurrence of a general Obligation, and a preſent diſcerned opportunity to promote the eternal good of Souls) the determination of the matter this way could not ſeem difficult to an impartial, unbribed Conſcience.

Whither the Diſcourſe it ſelf, the occaſion, and all circumſtances taken together have any aptneſs to ſerve that end, muſt be left to the Judgment of ſuch, as ſhall read, and conſider; with whom

whom the Diſcourſe *muſt ſpeak for it ſelf. And* what it had reference to, *will, we cannot doubt, appear not* very conſiderable *only, but be* highly grateful *alſo to all Pious and Good men. For tho' the Sermon import a relation to a* Funeral, *the Death of the Perſon had nothing in it ſo mournful, as his* Repentance to Life *will have with it of Satisfaction, and thanksgiving to God, with* all, *that are of a Serious, and Religious inclination.*

Nor can it enter into our thoughts, that any, to whom that Character belongs, will behold the inſtance of a Soul (as Chriſtian Charity *will believe)* reſcued out of the Snare of the Devil, *and tranſlated to Eternal Bliſs with a* ſlight, *or much leſs with an evil eye; only becauſe it was not* by their means, *or not by one, in all things,* of their mind and way. *Or that what is the* Joy *of Angels, can be the* Offence, *and* Grief *of* good men.

It is ſurely not poſſible, they *can be ſo fatally divided between* Paul, *and* Apollo, *and* Cephas, *as* utterly to forget *our* higher common Relation *to* Chriſt! *For do we not all know, we were Baptized into* his Name, *and not of* this *or* that (*imagined*) *head, or Maſter of a Sect?*

But though that tranſcendent Relation *be not* quite

quite forgotten, *there is too much cauſe to apprehend, and lament that it is not remembred, and conſidered enough. And to reflect on it as* one provoking cauſe *of God's with-holding his Spirit, in ſo great part, from the Miniſtry of his word; and of the conſequent paucity of Converſions, and abounding wickedneſs of the time; that there is ſo great a proneneſs, in many, to ſubject the* ſacred Miniſtry *to the ſerving of ſome* private mean deſign, *more than that of the* common Chriſtian Cauſe, *and Intereſt; to proſelite men to* themſelves, *rather than* Chriſt, *and make them more* exact Formaliſts *of their own Mould and Faſhion, rather than* good Chriſtians. *To teach them rather to* deny *or* embrace *this or that* frame, *and* ſet *of* Rites *and* Ceremonies, *than to* deny ungodlineſs and worldly Luſts, and to live Soberly, Righteouſly, and Godly in this preſent World. *And more earneſtly to inculcate, and preſs upon them the* things wherein we differ, *than the unſpeakably greater, and more momentous* things, wherein we are agreed; *and whereof the Dead, Carnal, diſſaffected heart of man far more needs the moſt earneſt inculcation.*

It may well be apprehended the Holy God *will*

will be jealous *in this case. And while we heartily joyn not, and do not accept and rejoyce in each others help and concurrence (though in somewhat different methods, which for the present we cannot give remedy to) in the pursuit* of his ends, *we have no reason to think it strange, if he leave us to* labour in the Fire, *and weary our selves, to no purpose, in the pursuit of* our own.

But let us make it our business to recover as many Souls as we can to God; and when any are regain'd, and born anew (*according to that* ancient Idea *of having all Children taken for the Children of the* Common-wealth) *let us, whoever was the happy instrument, account they are neither* mine, *nor* yours, *but the Children of the* Christian Church, *of the* Common-wealth of Israel, *the Sons of God, and a part of the Redeemers Seed. How great will the common Joy be upon all such occasions!* And God will rejoyce over us all, to do us good with all his heart, and with all his Soul, *and to use us for the doing of much.*

His Co-operation and Blessing may then be cheerfully expected, when our united strength and endeavour is aimed all one way; and directed to ends great and noble, worthy of God,

 and

and which he will not disdain, or count it dishonourable, and unfit to concur unto.

It will surely one day come to this. Nor is it to be despaired of, but that the late work of God's Grace *upon* this young man (*though since prematurely taken away*) *may be the earnest and pledge of more, of the same blessed kind; and* this Birth, *part of the* first Fruits *of a Pious Generation to succeed; wherein* Religion *shall live, and be transmitted in greater rigour, to them that shall come after.*

Our hope lies mostly among such. *And we earnestly desire you that are* young, *and in the prime of your age and strength, seriously to consider, how much the stress of a Religious Interest for future time in* England *depends upon* you. *Which that you* may *to better purpose; consider also, how much* you, *more peculiarly, have of present hope in your own case. God hath a kindness for your Age; makes his first applications to you, at your entrance upon the common affairs, and business of humane Life, that you would* then *bethink your selves of him, as* your Creatour, *and consider* how *you came into the World: whence it would not be difficult to collect* for what. *He covets the beginning of strength, his Soul desires*

the

the firſt ripe fruits. *And you have reaſon to be confident, that what he* ſeeks, *he will* accept, *if you conſecrate them to him (as the* firſt fruits *were the ſacred devoted part.)*

Some of you may perhaps, already diſcern in your ſelves vicious inclinations, *but your vices are not yet ſo* deeply rooted, *nor are ſo* fixedly habitual, *as theirs, who are grown old in Sin and eſtrangement from God. You have not ſo oft* grieved *his good* Spirit. *You have not reſiſted ſo many checks of Conſcience, nor ſtifled ſo many convictions, as many others have.*

You have a merciful God to deal with. Thoſe are his own words, *Prov.* 1. 23. *(and ſpoken more eſpecially to* ſuch as you, *as you will ſee, looking back to v.* 4.) Turn ye at my reproof: behold I will pour out my Spirit to you. *Unto that* great God, *the* Maker and Lord of Heaven and Earth, *you have been ſolemnly devoted. Conſider how* great *and* awful names, *the name of the* Father, *and of the* Son, *and of the* Holy Ghoſt *were in* your Baptiſm, *named upon you! You are as* truly obliged *hereby, as you are to* your natural Prince; *though, perhaps you have not, as yet, taken,* in your own Perſons, *the Oath of Allegiance. You would think it a reproach, and*

it would probably prove a ruin to you, to begin your course of commerce *in the world; with* Treachery *and* Falshood. *Is it more* Just, *or* Prudent, *and* Safe, *to deal deceitfully with* your God, *than with* men?

Do not think he is to be less the object of your Love, Fear *and* Obedience, *for that you* see him not; *How many* Subjects *in* England *have never seen the face of their* King? *and are they* the less bound *to be Loyal and Obedient? And how* are you bound, *but* for the sake of this invisible Lord, *and* in him?

You have, not seen *your* own Soul, *(or whatever you will call the* vital Principle *in you) which yet you are sure you have; for can you not distinguish your* living body *from a* dead? *are you not sure you live? and do you not* love your own life, *tho' you have not seen the very Principle it self, which you live by? the* God you have not seen *is as near you. In him you* live, move, and have your being. *You have great encouragement and obligation to* seek the Lord, *that you* Acts 17. *may even* feel, *and* find *him out, who is so little* far from any of you. You are his Ofspring, *as the* Holy Apostle *tells you, in the words of an Heathen, that you might understand it to be* no new,

new, or ſtrange notion; *but, even then, ancient and common. He is the* Author *and* Parent *of your* Life *and* Being. *It is* unnatural *to affect diſtance and ſtrangeneſs to* your own Father. *It is* through the high excellency *of his nature, that you* ſee *him not. And he is the object therefore of your more* excellent faculties. *You have a* mind *capable of knowing him, and a* will *of chooſing him for your* God, *if they were made* pure, *and* holy, *and* aright *directed towards him, which his* Grace, *and* Spirit *can ſoon effect in you, when you ſeriouſly ſeek, and rely upon them.*

'Tis of greateſt concernment to you to have his Favour, *in* whoſe Power *you are, and in* whoſe Hand your Breath is. *And can you be exempt from* his Power, *who made you, and all things? if you doubt whether he* can diſpoſe of you, reward *or* puniſh *you, was not the making of this World a greater thing? you cannot be ſo impoſed upon, if you uſe your underſtandings, as to be made believe, that it made it ſelf. For could you, if you were not, make your ſelves? and were it eaſier for all things, than for you?*

And you may ſenſibly perceive, *if you will but reflect, and uſe your thoughts, that you are Subject to a Superiour, Over-ruling Power, that there is*

a Lord

a Lord over you, *and that you live not* according to your own wills. *For are you never* ſick *againſt your wills, or in pain againſt your wills? and do you not know you muſt one day dye, tho' you be never ſo unwilling? is it not better to have that mighty Lord* your Friend, *than your* Enemy? in his Favour is life. *And he is in a Redeemer reconcileable to you. Read ſeriouſly,* 2 Cor. 5. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21.

Kingdoms and Nations are thrown into confuſion, if he be diſpleaſed, and no courſe be taken for ſeaſonable reconciliation. ★ *And can you ſtand before his anger? he hath long been* England's God, *your* God, *and* your Forefathers. *Do not you, in your own minds, eſteem that wiſe and ſage counſel,* thy Friend, and thy Fathers Friend, forſake thou not. ★ *How much more* thy God, and thy Fathers God! *It lies* upon you, *whether he ſhall continue the* God of England! *The* parental right *derived unto young ones,* continues *the* viſible relation, *while their nonage laſts, and incapacity to treat and capitulate for themſelves. But can you think,* when you are capable, *your* intereſt by your Parents *can avail you any thing* againſt your own perſonal rejection of God? *No,* not tho' *Abraham* were your Father, *if*

Jer. 18. 7. 8. 9, 10.

Pro. 27. 10.

you

you ſhould finally ſhew your ſelves rather a generation of Vipers: *Which we have great hope God will mercifully forbid.*

But if Englands Youth *ſhould* generally (*tho' not all at once, as they come not to be* ſuch *all at once*) againſt their Baptiſmal Vow, *caſt off God, here is an interciſion of the line, and an end of the relation between God and us. If therefore you* love your Country, *you will* love God, *and ſtudy to pleaſe and* ſerve him with your whole heart.

If you love your Prince, *you will do ſo; for would you have him to be* (*yea would you make him?*) *the Head of a deſtitute People,* forſaken of God?

And how would you propoſe to your ſelves to live your days, *and ſpend your time in the World, without God? What, in eating, and drinking, and pleaſing your Fleſh till you dye? would you not take it for a ſcorn, and ignominy to you, if one ſhould tell you, you were born for no higher purpoſes? and are capable of no higher?*

But how dare you think, without knowing, *and becoming* ſpecially related *to the* God of your lives, *of dying, and paſſing into* an unknown World?

World? *Peruſe ſeriouſly the* enſuing diſcourſe (*that we no longer detain you from it*) *if it ſignifies any thing to your better preparation for* Death *and* Judgment; *and* (*in Order thereto*) *to your holy, and more uſeful, comfortable life on Earth; It will anſwer the* Authors Deſign, *and* (with his) *the deſires and prayers of*

Your Affectionate Friends and

Servants in our Lord.

JOHN HOW.

V. ALSOP.

[redacted]

ERRATA.

PAge 6. l. 2. r. grateful, p. 11. l. 9. r. have right, p. 12. l. 29. dele did, l. laſt, r. of a, p. 17. l. 15. r. differences, p. 19. l. 23. lad ye, p. 21. l. 16. r. younger years, p. 24. l. 29. add to, p. 31. l. 2. dele and, p. 3. l. 7. r. exquiſite p. 32. l. 5. r. momentany.

A

Funeral-Sermon.

Eccleſiaſtes XI. 9.

Rejoyce, o young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart chear thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the ſight of thine eyes: but know thou that for all theſe things God will bring thee into judgment.

NOtwithſtanding our manifold advantages for ſerious Religion in our younger years, and the contrary inconveniences of deferring it to old Age or an indefinite hereafter; our frequent warnings by the death of others, to provide for our own, and the unſpeakable hazard of a ſick-bed Repentance; yet how apt are moſt perſons, in their youth and ſtrength, to forget their Creator and themſelves too! to indulge to carnal mirth and ſenſual delights; as ſuppoſing, by a fatal prejudice and miſtake, That obedience to God would introduce melancholly, deſtroy the chearfulneſs of converſation, and ſpoil the ſweet-

ness of human life, and thereupon refuse to bestow a serious thought about Religion and another World, till God by sickness, or an hasty death, summon them to appear before his Bar: Upon which account it cannot be thought unnecessary or unseasonable, upon all occasions, to mind young persons of their sin and duty, their snares and dangers, their latter end and final judgment.

What at this time directed my thoughts to such a subject, is not unknown to divers present, viz. *The deathbed Repentance of a young man lately deceased*, who for some time past attended this Lecture, I hope, at length, with some seriousness and profit, tho at first he came only with a design to carp and scoff, as with great remorse he told me in his last sickness.

And therefore, if there be any now come hither upon the *same* errand, and with the *same* thoughts, I pray God *command* their attention, (for otherwise it would be in vain for me to *beg* it) and accompany his own Word with a powerful efficacy to their hearts, to convince their judgments, and perswade their wills, and awaken their souls, that they may go away with other apprehensions and resolutions than they came hither, as this deceased Penitent once did; whose Repentance and Funeral calls loudly to us all to consider the Apostrophe of the Wise man in the Text, *Rejoice, o young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment.*

For the coherence of these words with the preceding Verses, we need only observe, that *Solomon* in the former Chapter, having given many excellent rules for the quieting of our minds, and the comfort of our lives, under all that *vanity* which he pronounces upon the World, he comes

comes in this Chapter to exhort us to prepare for another. For when all is done that can possibly be effected in order to a contented and a happy life, yet he tells us, that our life it self is vain and transient, our death inevitable, and that *the days of darkness will be many, verſ.* 8. and then confutes that unreasonable inference, which the young *Epicure* is too prone to make from such premises; deriding his foolish pretence and plea, by an *Ironie*: and yet endeavouring to awaken his Conscience, by declaring the certainty of an after-reckoning, and by a solemn citation of him before Gods Tribunal. For to this purpose, we may suppose the young sensualist to retort the Argument, "Are all things vain? Is life uncertain, and death and "darkness near? let me then enjoy the light as long as I "can, let me indulge my appetite and please my senses, "and gratify my lusts, and make the best improvement "of this vain, this short, uncertain life. Have I but a "a little time in which to enjoy this world? Let me not "make it shorter by a Stoical reservedness; let me not lose "this day, least I never have another; but *eat and drink "for to-morrow I may dye.*

To which supposed Objection, the *Wise man* answers, in the Words I have read, *Rejoyce, o young man in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, q. d.* "Let it do thee good, and bring thee joy, be as merry as "thou canst, and take all the satisfaction thy lusts can pro"cure, if thou think it best, and most adviseable to do so. "*Walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes. q. d.* "Being resolved upon a shore life and a merry, gaulk "nothing which thy lust look's at; deny thy self no"thing thy foolish heart can wish, or thy sensual appetite "may crave. But know for certain, a day of reckoning "is at hand, when God will call thee to an account for

"thy ſenſual luſts and youthful follies: However now "thou maiſt ſtifle the convictions of thy Conſcience by "repeated debauches and lewd company; however now "thou maiſt make a ſhift to drown the ſentiments of a "reaſonable Soul by the noiſe of riot, or bring the plea-"ſures of the *fleſh* to baniſh the preſaging fears of thy "immortal *ſpirit*: however now thou maiſt flatter or "delude thy ſelf by the principles of a *Sadducee*, or pleaſe "thy ſenſes by the practice of an *Epicure*; *yet for all theſe "things God will bring thee to judgment*, q. d. Whither "thou will or no, a ſcrutiny ſhall be made into thy paſt "actions, and an account muſt be given of thine ill-ſpent "life: and for all the vanities of thy *youth*, and the ſen-"ſual pleaſures that now entice thee; God, a terrible "and a righteous God will bring thee to his *judgment-"Seat*.

And it follows, v. 10. *Therefore remove ſorrow from thy heart*, (by avoiding ſin, which is the cauſe of ſorrow) *and put away evil from thy fleſh, for childhood and youth are vanity*.

From the words may be collected theſe Three General Heads of Diſcourſe, as comprehenſive of the ſum of the Text.

1. In that *Solomon* makes uſe of an *Ironie*, and ſo in mockery and deriſion bids the young man *rejoice*, we may take notice, that *ſinful mirth, and ſenſual pleaſure, is no real and ſubſtantial joy, fit for a wiſe man to chooſe*. It hath but the *appearance* and the *name* of joy; for what is truly ſo, is nowhere to be had, without *the fear of God, and the faithful keeping of his Commandments*.

2. In that he directs his diſcourſe to the *young man* in particular, we have a plain intimation that *young perſons of all others, are moſt apt to lay aſide the fear of God, and for-*

forget their Creator, through the temptations of ſenſual pleaſures and youthful luſts.

3. Becauſe he tells the *young man*, that even *He muſt come to judgment*, as an argument moſt proper to damp his carnal mirth and jollity, and put a check to his purſuit of youthful Luſts. We may hence obſerve, in what reſpects *the conſideration of a future judgment hath any force of Argument to perſwade young perſons to ſtop in their cours of ſin, and to remember their Creatour in the days of their youth.*

As to the firſt, I ſhall divide it into Two Branches, and ſo conſider, 1. *That the carnal mirth of ſinners hath but the appearance and name of joy*: being expreſt by an *Ironie*, while on the contrary, they meet with trouble and ſorrow, and diſſatisfaction in purſuit of their luſts.

2. That *the life of a ſerious Chriſtian, in the fear of God and the keeping of his Commandments, is the only chearful and merry life.*

1ſt. That *ſinful mirth and ſenſual pleaſure hath but the appearance and name of joy.* Doubtleſs the thought of Joy carrieth Argument with it to *allure*, as that of ſorrow to *diſſwade*; on which account we are commonly averſe to ſerious practical Religion in our younger years, as ſuppoſing it would interfere with all the pleaſures of human life, and doom us to a perpetual mourning melancholick ſtate: whereas the *Irony* in the Text may let us know, That while we *walk in the way of our own hearts, and in the ſight of our eyes*, we deceive our ſelves with the *ſhadow* of Joy, and the *name* of Mirth.

'Tis true, he *bids* the young man here *rejoyce, and let his heart chear him*; but it is in perfect ſcorn and deriſion, as knowing well that all his mirth and chearfulneſs muſt be falſe and ſpurious, vain and cauſleſs, leſs in *quantity* and worſe in *quality*, than the reioicing of an upright Chriſtian.

an. For as to sensual mirth, so greatful and infecting to the generality of youth, either it depends upon their
Prov. 23. 29. Company, which sometimes begets quarrels *and wounds without cause*, or proves not suitable to their humour; or else ariseth from a particular *temper of Body*, heighten'd by meats and drinks, and more than ordinary Diet; (and so hath more of the *Beast* than of the *Man*;) and by consequence, must needs be of a short continuance; or else is the sole effect of youth, and so will undoubtedly decay, as they advance in Age. However it is in it self contemptible and base, as feigned and not sincere, as appearing and not real, as vain and without foundation, as irrational and without a cause; and not contemptible only in *it self*, but likewise in relation to the *Subject*, the inferior part of Man: and much more in reference to the *Object* of their carnal mirth, when 'tis not only sensual, but forbidden too; and as truly so in regard of the *Duration* also, since it is easily disturb'd, and quickly gone.

How can it be imagin'd that a course of sin can give a Man any solid mirth! when the Men themselves are at such a vast expence of care, and pains, and trouble, of unavoidable fear, and shame, and anxious thoughts; either to contrive, or to accomplish, or to conceal their wicked purposes and practices? so that I need not ask that question concerning the *joy* of the *Epicure*, which *Job* doth
Job 27. 8. of the *Hope* of the *Hypocrite*, *what is it when God shall take away his Soul?* But in the mean time, what is it now? what mirth and joy have they for the present? who must rack their brains and stretch their fancies, and employ their most solicitous and concerned thoughts, how to make *provision*
Rom. 13. 14. *for their lusts*; and then must bribe their reasons, and debauch their Conscience, actually to enjoy them. For oftentimes a troublesome Conscience lays so many rubs in their

their way, which they know not how to remove; starts so many objections, which they cannot answer; makes so many doubts and scruples, which they know not how to resolve and overcome; that if they will venture upon the sin, it must be even in despite of themselves.

Sometimes the very contrivance of their sins gives them sufficient uneasiness and trouble to spoil their mirth; such previous thoughtfulness being necessary to frame the model, to fix the time, to design the manner, and to order the circumstances of some impieties; and sometimes the wickedness *is its own punishment.*

Look upon the young sinner swelling in pride, or burning in lust, or drowning in sensuality; consider him rackt with impatient desires, and burthen'd with unavoidable fears, fears his attempt be unsuccesful, or least he be disappointed in the secrecy of the enjoyment, and his shame and folly published to the world: And yet this is the merry life of the sensual *Epicure!*

Besides, when, by a custom and continuance in sin, the Devil is in full possession, and Lust upon the Throne; what *Tyranny* doth it exercise? and what a *blind obedience* must the sinner yield? How often are you forced to declare, that you approve of that, which your mind condemns? how often do you subscribe to that as true, which you know to be false? and so run headlong against the light of nature, and the checks of Conscience, and surrender Soul and Body and all to the will of Satan, and the command of an imperious, domineering Lust?

Now what mirth or joy can consist with such a servitude? yea, while you *weary your selves to commit iniquity,* what frequent vexations do you meet with from the disappointment of your hopes, finding sorrow, where you look'd for joy, an offensive stench instead of a perfume; *Jer.* 9. 5.

and

and a noisom weed in the room of a flower? Still some thing more, and further is thought necessary to your contentment, and satisfaction, and joy, that what you posses already: either the *increase* of somewhat which you cannot obtain, or the *absence* of somewhat which you cannot get rid of, or the *continuance* of somewhat which is not in your power to keep, or such a *change* and variety as you cannot accomplish: And must this be concluded the only merry and joyful life?

Moreover, let a man but ask you on the *morrow*, what is become of the pleasure of the *last night's* debauch, when there remains nothing but a sting in the conscience. Where *then*, I pray is your mirth and joy? For when once the heat of your Wine and Lust is over, and you dare take the liberty of sober thoughts, a guilty Conscience will then tell you *your own*, and you shall hardly be able to stop its mouth. And tho' in part you may have wash'd away the sense of former *drunkenness* by more *Wine*, or think to drown the voice of your bosome enemy, the accuser within, by running into jovial Company, and an excess of riot; yet some smart affliction, or some sharp reproof, or some serious Sermon, may set your sins in order again, and make your wounds to bleed afresh: And then *Conscience* (notwithstanding your endeavours to stop its mouth, and smother its accusations) will not fail to lash the *Drunkard*, and stone the *Adulterer*, and make the Lips of an *Harlot* bite like a *Cocatrice*. You *shall* hear its voice, and understand its errand, and feel a mortal qualm upon your spirits, from such convictions as you cannot easily smother.

But if this be not the case of *all*, because *some* are given up to a *Reprobate sense*; yet how often or how boldly soever the agitation of their own disturbed thoughts set all in a flame within?

within. When the *remembrance* of their *drunken* excesses gives them Vinegar and Gall to *drink*, and makes them once more sick; from that terrible thought, that for ought they know the next draught may be of the *Cup* of God's Eternal Wrath in the Lake of Hell. When the remembrance of their lustful *heats* gives them the sad prospect and *preludium* of unquenchable *Fire*, into which they are sinking. When the *echo* of their Oaths and Blasphemies (which *stuck* thro' the Name of God) shall *peirce* their Souls with an intolerable remorse. When a sad reflection on their past prophaness, in scoffing at what is Serious and Holy, in ridiculing Religion, and making a mock of Sin, shall put them into a fit of trembling, from the unavoidable fears of a Judgment to come. Now if this be the *ordinary* state of their case, as most certain it is, well might the *wise man* expose their mirth to scorn, and by an *Ironie* give them leave to rejoyce.

2. *That the Joy of a Righteous, Holy Person, in the fear of God and the keeping his Commandments is the only true and proper Joy.* And the Life of an upright Christian, the only chearful and merry Life.

Whereas some men have inferr'd, that because there is a *Woe* pronounc'd in Scripture to those that *laugh*, and a *blessedness* to those that *mourn* and *weep*: that it is therefore necessary, if we will be serious Christians, that we must be sad and unsociable, melancholy and dejected, and lead a life of continual complaints and sorrows. They might as well conclude a necessity of turning Monks or Beggars, because the Scripture saith, that *it is easier for a Camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* For as to that part of a Christians Life, which consists in the *contemplation* of spiritual things, the infinite excellency and novelty of the *objects* must

Luk. 6. 25, Matt. 4. 5.

Matt. 16. 24

must render it pleasant. And as to that, which consists in *practice*, it must needs be more so, from the encouraging Testimony of a good Conscience, and the Joy of the Holy Ghost, unspeakably more delightful and satisfactory, than the most ravishing pleasures the *Epicure* can boast of. The best of *it* being short and transient, and mixt with some uneasiness and trouble. But the delights of an Holy Soul, are pure and substantial, durable and lasting, rising higher and increasing more by the very injoyment, not easily interrupted by a change of outward Circumstances and Conditions in the World, not broken on a sudden by little accidents that befal us unawares; which is not to be deny'd in reference to sensual Joy.

Sirs, who is it, that either is or can be Joyful, that actually is so, or hath reason to be so? If not the upright obedient Christian?

Is not the continual presence of *God*, the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, and the constant Ministry and Attendance of his blessed *Angels*, a ground of Joy? He may then rejoyce. Is not peace with God, and peace with Conscience, and peace with the whole Creation? Is not Redemption from the bondage of Sin, from the slavery of the Devil, from the sting of Death, and the curse of the Law, and Gods Eternal Wrath, enough to make him chearful? He may then rejoyce.

If the favour of God, and the acceptance of their persons and services with him, be sufficient reason to dissuade from sadness; they may then *eat their Bread with Joy, and drink their Wine with a merry heart, for God accepteth both them and their work.* *Eccl.* 9. 7.

If freedom of access to the Throne of Grace; if a promise of being granted what so ere they ask; if the high-

est assurance from a God that cannot lye, that all things shall work for good to. If to dwell in his house, and sit at his Table, and be related to him as a Father; if to hear his Word, and sing his Praise, and receive the Communications of his Grace, the pledges of his Covenant, Love, and the comfortable foretasts of Everlasting Joy, be enough to make them *Chearful*, They, and they only *right*, have to be so. And that in *Every Condition*. Are they reproacht and slander'd? they may yet be chearful, because God *will bring forth their Righteousness as the Light, and clear their Integrity as the noon-day*. Are they afflicted, by poverty, or sickness, or disappointments in their designs and hopes? they may yet be chearful, and thank God for all the advantage and benefit of his wise dispensations of providence. Are they Tempted by the Devil? they may yet be *Chearful*; *because God will shortly tread Satan under their feet, and not permit them to be tempted above what their able*. Do they suffer for Righteousness sake? they may yet be Chearful; yea, *rejoyce* and *be exceeding glad*, and *count it all Joy* to receive such an honour. For there are promises, perticularly referring to such a state, sufficient to encourage them; yea, to make them rejoyce. Do they sometimes Mourn with a *godly sorrow*; yet may they still rejoyce, since to consider the end and effect of that sorrow, will give it a mixture of Joy. And even their penetential tears do but clear their eyes to look up to Heaven with delight and comfort, and enable them the better to read a pardon.

Psal. 27. 6.

Rom. 16. 20

1 *Cor.* 10. 13.

Jam. 1. 2.

And here it were easy to shew how their Faith, and hope, and love, how their humility, meekness, and patience, their contentedness with God's allotment, their resignation to his Will, their satisfaction in his Choyce, their well pleasedness with his Order, their preparedness for

every Condition, their diligence in their callings, their moderation in the use of lawful things, and their innocency and harmlesness in their carriage and behaviour towards others, do all contribute to a chearful and a joyful life. Therefore well might the Psalmist tell us that *the Righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and all the upright in Heart shall Glory.* And well might our Lord advise his Disciples not to be lifted up with the gift of Miracles, but *rejoyce rather that their names were written in Heaven.* And well might the Apostle command Christians to *rejoyce* (not by an *Ironie*, as *Solomon* here speaks to the Young Man, but) in the most real and proper sense, *Rejoyce in the Lord always, yea, and again, I say rejoyce.*

Psal. 64. 10. Luke. 10. 20.

Thus much for the first General.

2. Let us consider, in that the Wise-man directs his discourse to the Young Man in particular, we have thence a plain intimation, that *of all others, young persons are most apt to neglect the fear of God, and be unmindful of their Maker through the temptation of sensual pleasures and youthful lusts.*

Tho' God demand his right as soon as we are capable of understanding it, and to serve the Lord from our youth is but just and reasonable, considering that so great a part of our life is already cut off by our Infancy and Childhood; tho' the longer we delay, the greater difficulty shall we meet with when ever we set about it; tho' our whole life at longest (as soon as we are capable and as long as we did live) should be devoted to God, and 'tis all little enough, if we consider its relation to our Eternal State; tho' the sooner we begin, the more welcome we shall be, and the more acceptable our Obedience; yea, tho' an *Early* piety be the only hopeful method to prevent the hazard of a sudden death, and the terrible reflections of old age, and the intolerable pangs a death bed remorse; yet such

is

is the power of Original Sin in young persons; such, and so many are the snares of youth, and those so agreeable to their vicious inclinations; such the force of prejudice; such the artifices of the Devil; and so prevalent the perswasions of evil Company; they are usually so proud, ignorant, and unexperienced, so rash, hasty, and unadvised, and so easily infected with Sadduceism and the principles of Infidelity, so loth to assent to any such premises, whose conclusion will infer the necessity of changing their present course, that they of all others do most need a serious admonition to remember their latter end and final Judgment, least through the temptations of Sensual mirth and pleasure, they *put the evil day far from them.*

For (alas!) how seldome do we consider in Youth what we are! and why we were made! or what is our business in the World! and what will be the end of our present course! Whereas one thought of God and our last Judgment, methinks, should be enough to *drown* all other thoughts as the noise of a *Canon* doth that of a *Whisper.*

Sense is so prevalent, and Reason so weak, we are so much inclined to the one, and so unwilling to be led by the other, that toys and trifles, sports and recreations, and the vanities of fools and Children possess our hearts, and employ our time, not looking *behind* us, to what we have either done, or been; nor before us, whither we are going, and what in all likelyhood will be the period of our present mirth, and the sad *Catastrophe* of our Youthful lusts.

Young persons will hardly be convinced, but that Now is their season to be brisk, and jovial, having time (as they count) to command, and the World before them; that it is time enough to think of Death when they are arrested by

by ſickneſs, or *wither'd* by old Age; let them be concerned about another World, who are leaving this; their blood now is warm, and their Spirits nimble, their ſenſes are quick, and their paſſions ſtrong; they will *walk in the way of their own hearts and in the ſight of their eyes*; and ordinarily ſplit upon that Rock of Evil company, where ſo many thouſand Veſſells at their *firſt launching out* have daſht in pieces. Beſides, their Age is moſt inviting to the Devil to bend his chiefeſt forces againſt them, rather than againſt Children, or Aged perſons: the *former* not being capable of making a choice, and the *latter* being fix'd and reſolv'd in their way; his principal endeavours therefore are levell'd againſt Youth, to draw off their hearts from God and Holy things, and to divert their thoughts from the conſideration of Death and Judgment, which would otherwiſe reſtrain and check them in purſuit of their luſts. And this brings me to the Third General, to conſider,

3. *That for all theſe things God will bring us to Judgment.* And therein what *Arguments* the thoughts of a *future Judgment* may rationally ſuggeſt *to damp the carnal mirth of young perſons*, and perſuade them to *remember their Creatour in the days of their youth.*

And to inforce this Argument I might here mind you of the miſchief you will do to others by an ill example, and of the aggravation of your ſin by employing the beſt of your time in the ſervice of the Devil, which muſt needs make Judgment more terrible, in that your final doom, the conſequences of it will be more ſevere.

I might tell you the ſooner you repent, the more hopeful is your caſe in reference to a pardon; I might largely deſcribe the happy influence of an early Piety with reſpect to the future part of our lives, to direct our choice

choice, and govern our actions, and prevent a great deal of Sin, and shame, sorrow, and repentance; I might mention the comfortable reflections in Old Age upon a well-spent life; our capacity of greater Service to God now; and our assurance of a weightier crown of Glory hereafter; with all the other considerable benefits that have respect either to a safe and happy life, a comfortable Old Age, and a peacable Death, or a joyful Resurrection, and a blessed Eternity; all which will come under the Argument in the Text; and what I shall say of it may be compriz'd under the following particulars.

1. Let young persons consider, that notwithstanding their present mirth and jollity, yet the *Judgement of God is infallibly certain.* It is an unquestionable, undoubted truth, that *for all these things God will bring thee to Judgment.*

2. Consider, that this Judgment is *near at hand*, and will *shortly* take place.

3. Consider your summons may be *suddain*, before you are aware.

4. Consider, that Youth and health is the *fittest time to prepare for this Judgment of God.*

5. That if through the temptations of carnal mirth and youthful lusts you neglect your preparation, it is more then probable *your passage by death to this Judgment of God will be very uncomfortable and full of horrour.*

6. That *this Judgment it self, and its immediate consequences, will be intollerably dreadful to unprepared Sinners, whether Young or Old.*

7. Consider, that notwithstanding your present mirth and jollity, yet *this final judgment is infallibly certain.* What is here affirmed concerning *persons*, is asserted likewise concerning *things* in the next Chapter, *that God will bring every work into* Eccl. 12. 14.

into Judgment; with every ſecret thing whither it be good, or whither it be evil. Methinks I need not tell you, that the Doctrine of this final Judgment is declar'd in Scripture with the greateſt plainneſs, confirm'd by the ſtrongeſt Evidence, and preſt upon the Conſcience with the moſt cogent, and inforcing and Arguments; eſpicially ſince the pretended Objections on the behalf of the *Sadducee*, and the ſenſual *Epicure* are ſo weak and trifling, that if their *luſts* were not ſtronger than their *arguments*, they *themſelves* would be aſhamed to offer them.

For whoever disbelieves a future Judgment muſt either conclude that the *Almighty God cannot*, or *that the Righteous God will not* call us to an account for what we have received and done, tho' his abſolute *Omnipotence* doth aſſure us, that he *can*; and his invariable *truth* (having declared his purpoſe) that undoubtedly he *will*.

And do we think that all the aſſurance of this Judgment of God; which the Scripture gives us that all thoſe plain aſſertions concerning the Judge himſelf, and the perſons to be Judged, and the conſequence of the Judgment, and the certainty of it, that they are only *terms of art* to affright the world, and not real intended truths, which will take effect according to their natural meaning; that the whole account is perfect *fiction*, and meer Romance, contriv'd on purpoſe to keep the World in due *Decorum*, and ſo to prevent ſome bad effects only in reference to the preſent State of things, which would probably follow, if this belief did not obtain; Whereas is it not neceſſary, that there ſhould be a Judgment day, for the conviction and condemnation of great Sinners, that ſcorn the Legiſlative authority of God, and trample on his Government, and dare above the check and controul of humane laws; (to manifeſt the Righteouſneſs of

God,

God, as Ruler of the world, in rendering to every man according to his works, and to uphold the honour of his wise Government? which of Judgment is as necessary and essential a part as Legislation; the latter without the former being little else than shew and mockery; is it not necessary for the vindication of Religion from that contempt and scorn that is pour'd upon it; Is it not necessary to unriddle the mysteries of Divine Providence, and disclose the secret wickedness of Hypocrites, and put a difference between those that serve him, and those that refuse to do so? As likewise to rectify the mistakes and false opinions that are abroad in the world concerning God, and Christ, and Holiness, and Sin, to put an end to controversies, and determine the difference concerning what is Truth and what is Error? These and such like things considered (besides the Authority of Divine writ) do *morally assure* us, that there will be an after-reckoning, and a final Judgment. And methinks one thought of the certainty thereof, should give a check to your carnal mirth, and cast a damp upon your Sensual joy, and abate your heat and vigour in a course of Sin. For did we but believe that for all these things God will bring us to Judgment, how could we so readily entertain the temptations of the Devil, and fall such an *Easy prey* to his devices? How could so many unhappy *Youths* invade their own Damnation, and snatch it as it were out of the hands of Justice? thrust away their present and future happiness, and fly into the Devils arms in the pursuit of their youthful lusts, tho' they have been told so plainly, and warn'd so frequently of a Future Judgment? How could these things be, if they did but believe the certainty of this final judgment, and how dreadful will be their case who are not awaken'd till they find it to be so, who will not acknowledg

this Judgment of God, till they know the dreadfulneſs and terrour of it, by being brought to their Trial; who will not believe that God will ever call them to an account, till a final Impenitence, joyn'd with their Infidelity, bring them under his condemning Sentence.

2. Conſider, that *this Judgment is near at hand* and *will ſhortly take place.* As Death will conſign us over to God's Tribunal; ſo childhood, and youth, manhood, and old age, are but ſeveral ſtages that haſten us to Death. Yet *Job.*16.22. a little while and we muſt *go the way of all living*: How concern'd and thoughtful ſoever now we are about this World, we muſt ſhortly bid adieu, and take our leave. Even the Man of *buſineſs* muſt find a *time* to dye, and give an account of his Stewardſhip; tho' he allow himſelf *little* or *none* to prepare for Death and Judgment. Our *Youth* and *Strength* is quickly gone, we ſoon decline and languiſh into Duſt: Aſſoon as we begin to live, we are haſtening to the end of our Life. As a Candle, aſſoon as it begins to burn, or an hour glaſs aſſoon as it is turned, doth haſten to its end: (our life withering like a *1 Pet.*1.24. *Flower,* and paſſing like a watch in the night.) We muſt *Pſal.* 90. 4. dye ſhortly, and much ſooner than they who lived in the firſt ages of the World. As Death is the certain conſequence of *old age*; ſo *thoſe Evil days* (as the wiſe Man calls them) do ſtill *draw near,* and will quickly overtake us. Whether we eat, or drink, or ſleep; whether we be ſad or merry; whether we talk or are ſilent; whether we work or are idle; whether we are ſtudious or careleſs; whether we prepare for Death and Judgment, or whether we deſpiſe and avoid ſuch Thoughts: And yet how many ſpend their youthful days in vanity and ſin, with a careleſs neglect of God and their Salvation, *in gluttony and*

and Drunkenneſs, in Chambering and wantonneſs, not putting on the Lord Jeſus, nor walking in his Spirit; but making proviſions for the fleſh to fulfill the luſts thereof. Rom. 12. 13. 14. As if this day of the Lord were a great way off, at a mighty diſtance: Whereas our Judge is at the door, and the end of all things doth approach, and it can't be long ere all the World muſt receive their Doom.

A beleiving thought of *this*, would certainly imbitter the pleaſures of ſin, would quench our fond deſire, and check our Fooliſh hopes, and ſpoil the reliſh of our carnal Joy; would blaſt the Beauty, and darken the luſter of worldly greatneſs; would ſadden the delights, and weaken the Temptations of fleſhly pleaſures. For what ſatisfaction can that man take in Jovial Company, in the paſtimes of Children, and the laughter of Fools, who is verily perſwaded, that ere long he muſt appear to *Judgment*? How can he be enamour'd of this *Earth*, and after ſerious deliberation be fond of outward grandure; who beleives, and knows, that ſhortly the *Earth* it ſelf *ſhall be burnt up*, the Trumpet of the Arch Angel ſound, and our Glorious Judge ſummon all Man-kind before his Bar, by that Thundring Voice, *Ariſe dead and come to Judment*? And can we grant this *day of the Lord*, to be not only certain, but *near* at hand; and not think it time to prepare for our ſolemn appearance? ſhall we contradict our principles, and live in a repugnancy to our avowed Creed, under the plain cenſure of Notorious *Hypocriſy* or folly? The *Firſt* from our profeſſion, if we do not beleive it; the *Second* from the unſuitableneſs of our practiſe, in caſe we do. 2 *Pet.* 3. 10.

3. Conſider, *that your Summons to this Judgment of God may be ſudden and unexpected, and overtake you unawares.* When God will require your Souls to appear before his

Tribunal; how ſoon or ſuddenly he will do it, you cannot ſay. The *time* and *place* of our Death, in kindneſs and wiſdom, is concealed from us, that we may *every where* ſtand upon our gaurd, and *every moment* expect our call to Judgment: becauſe we know not whether God by ſickneſs will advertiſe us of our approaching end, or his ſtroke be ſudden by an unexpected caſualty. And therefore *Moſes* ſpeaking to the *Jews*, as to one man, (*Deut.* 30. 20.) ſaith he of God, *He is thy Life, and the length of thy Days. q d.* The ſhortning or prolonging of thy days is in the Hand of God. Hence ſome are taken the firſt hour, and ſome at the third, and ſome at the ſixth, and ſome at the ninth, and others let alone till the eleventh; but that is a great *uncertainty*: for we may be ſurpriſed. Innumerable accidents attend us every where, that may blot our names out of the *Book of Life*, and ſuddainly confine us to the Chambers of Death. It may be *this day* we are Jovial, and in health among our friends, and worldly affairs: and *to morrow* arreſted with a Summons to Judgment. In the *morning* in chaſe of earthly honour, riches, or delights: and in the *Evening* laid out for our funeral, by various accidents not now foreſeen by us or any of our friends.

We *may* be cut off while we preſume on hereafter, while we reſolve to repent, in the midſt of our holy purpoſes, before they are performed: For tho' we read in Scripture of the *Sinner of an Hundred years old, that he ſhall be accurſt*; yet have we no example of *one in* a thouſand, that lives to that age. *This young perſon*, whoſe funeral occaſion'd my diſcourſe, not many days ſince was as ſtrong and healthful, and as likely to Live as any of us; and 'Tis a very great queſtions, whether *you* and *I* may have ſo much Time and Space to repent upon a *Sick-bed* as *he* had, who enjoy'd his ſenſes and the uſe of his reaſon to the very laſt. *This day* therefore cannot be too ſoon to prepare,

pare, because to *morrow* may be too late: Every unprepared Sinner being expos'd to as many hazards of Everlasting destruction, as their may be accidents to surprize 'em with sudden Death.

4. Consider, that *youth and health is the fittest time to prepare for this final judgment*: As to the *former*, if we but reflect on the manifold infirmities of old age, that weakness of body, and that decay of parts which doth usualy accompany that state, the hardning of their hearts by a custome and continuance in Sin; the loss of memory and quick apprehension; the want of those vigorous Affections, and flexible inclinations which they had in Youth; which makes it more difficult to convince and perswade them; such considerations as these, methinks should be enough to discourage a delay in our young yeears.

But besides this, how can such persons expect to find' acceptance with *God* in the dregs of their time! after the misspending of an whole Life to *his* dishonour? for tho I would not discourage their utmost endeavours, and thro' the mercy of God in Christ, there is hope enough to prevent a total dispair; yet what can we suppose should be the substance of such a mans prayer, but to this effect?

"Lord, I have wasted my days in sin, and sacrificed the "flower of mine age to sport and folly, to the provoca- "tion of thy Justice, and the hazard of my Salvation; "the best of all my Time, I must needs confess, hath been "devoted to the will of Satan, and devoured by my Lusts: "But I here present thee with the Lees and refuse of my "strength and Age, the little fragments, and poor remain- "der which they have left; I beseech thee, for the sake of "Christ to receive me now at last, tho' I did obstinately de- "ny obedience to thy earliar calls, and wilfully refus'd to re- "turn sooner: tho' now my strength, as well as my body, is "bow'd down to the Grave, and I am hardly capable

of

"of doing thee any Service: denyme not, O Lord, *to live* "*with thee* in the *other World*, tho' I have liv'd ſo *long* "*without thee in this*. What prevalency do we imagine there can poſſibly be in ſo *weak an addreſs*? without a Soverain extraordinary Grace to relieve the exigence of ſuch ſad and diſcourageing Circumſtances?

And then as to *health*, that for certain is the moſt *proper time* to prepare for Judgment: Let us but ſuppoſe the young ſinner ſeiz'd by a fit of Sickneſs, if the accuteneſs of the diſeaſe do not influence the brain, aud and cauſe a *dilirium*; yet is *that* a time to repent, and make your peace with God, and provide for our appearance before his judgment Seat? for uſually the underſtanding is then clouded, the fancy then diſturb'd, the paſſions diſordered, and the thoughts diſtracted.

Conſider ſeriouſly, what is wont to be the hurry of a violent diſtemper; ſuppoſe reſtleſneſs, through heat, or pain, or want of ſleep: or ſuppoſe the Phyſician ſhould miſtake thy caſe: or the Devil uſe his ſubtelty and malice to deceive or terrify thy guilty Soul; and then tell me, whether a *ſick-bed* be a fit ſeaſon to prepare for *Judgment*? May not thy thoughts have work enough to ſtruggle with thy pains? or to ſettle thine eſtate? or regard thy mourning friends about thee? When thy pulſe is low, and thy breath ſhort, and thy Spirits almoſt gone, thy Sins many, and thy fears great, and thou haſt hardly Sufficient ſtrength to get rid of a clot of Spittle; is *that* a time to enter the liſts with *Principalities and powers*, and all the rulers of outer darkneſs? Beſide, 'tis the fate of many, the nearer they approach to Death, that the leſs apt they are to believe it: and ſo periſh in their ſecurity, and are totally unconcern'd about a future judgment.

But ſuppoſing the free uſe of Reaſon, and an awaken'd apprehenſion

apprehenſion likewiſe of what refers to their Immortal Souls, and their Eternal abode. I then add:

5. That if, through the inticements of youthful luſts, you now neglect to prepare, it is very probable, and you may juſtly fear it, that *your paſſage, by Death, to this Judgment of God will be very uncomfortable and full of horror*: whether repentance on the brink of the Grave, after a a wicked life, may be Saving or no, is not the queſtion. Thro' an extraordinary act of Grace (whereof the penitent Theif was an inſtance) it cannot be deny'd poſſible: But when it is ſincere and ſaving, who can tell, any otherwiſe, than as in charity we muſt hope the beſt? For as to the *perſons* themſelves, on a ſick and deathbed, how can they in an *Ordinary* way be aſſured of their ſincerity? it is therefore probable, that their laſt Sickneſs will be very uncomfortable, tho' their Repentance ſhould prove ſincere, and their Souls ſaved in the day of Chriſt. For ſuppoſe, when their ſins ſtare them in the face, and they did never till now bethink themſelves of the neceſſity of a pardon; That Satan ſhould now tell them, that their Repentance doth come too late to meet with that mercy they ſo long abus'd. And that 'tis all owing to their Fears of Death, and the apprehended dreadful conſequences of dying. If he ſhould tell 'em, that the pleaſures of Sin being loſt, and ſo the bait to intice them gone; every thing about them looks ſad and mournful; and ſuch a change of their condition, from health to ſickneſs, and the Gates of Death, muſt needs alter their reſolutions and thoughts. If he ſhould tell 'em, that the nearneſs of Eternity cannot but make a perſon, who hath ſpace to conſider, more apprehenſive of *another World*, and concerned about it, than at other times; and that if Sickneſs and Death were at a greater diſtance, they would ſtill be the ſame: which

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is to ſadly probable from the many Examples of thoſe, who have return'd to their *former ſins*, aſſoon as they return'd to their *health*; and left all their repentance, their holy thoughts, and good reſolutions, in that Sick-bed, where at firſt they took 'em up. If the Devil ſuggeſt ſuch a Temptation as this to the Sick Penitent, who *hath hitherto walk'd in the way of his own heart, and in the ſight of his Eyes*, what can he reply, or plead on his own behalf, to make proof of the Sincerity of his Repentance to himſelf, or to thoſe about him? However, it may become us to conſider ſeriouſly, that God doth oftentimes in righteous Judgment open the Eyes of *Great Sinners* on a Death-bed; and fill their Souls with an amazing horror from the fears and foreſight of of his approaching vengeance. When they cannot but apprehend, that their Sinning ſeaſon is now expir'd; their mirth and jollity over; their final Judgment at hand; and their *Bodies* and *Souls* within a few hours to part, and ſo be divided between the *Grave* and *Hell*; you will then admit other thoughts of God, and his terrible Judgment, than at preſent in your careleſs health: bitterly reflecting on your paſt follies, in the days of your Youth; and freely condemning your former choice: the ſerious review of your ſenſual Joys, (which are fled as a ſhadow, and vaniſht like a cloud of ſmoak) ſhall give you an unexpreſſible remorſe and ſhame; having barter'd away your Souls for ſuch a thing of nought, and ventured your Eternal Salvation for a trifling luſt.

"Was my God, my Soul, and my Salvation, of no greater "value, will you then be forc'd ſay; of no greater "value; than ſo eaſily to be parted with, for the ſhort ſa-"tisfaction of a brutiſh forbidden pleaſure? muſt I leave "this world I lov'd ſo dearly? and bid adieu for ever to "all its injoyments? are all my good days paſt? is

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"all my mirth and joy concluded? and nothing but E-
"ternal sorrows to be expected? must all my mirth and
"laughter be exchanged for tears and howling? my
"ease and pleasure for unsupportable and remedilesss torments?
"must my guilty Soul be thus torn from my body? and
"from all things in which it took delight? to be drag'd
"and hurried to a dismal place, where it will hate to live,
"and yet cannot dye? Must I sport, and sing, and re-
"vel it no more? Must I brave it out in Pride no longer?
"and relish the delights of sense no more, no more, for
"ever?

"And which is worse, infinitely worse: must I make my ap-
"pearance before my offended Judge, whose threatnings
"I derided, whose wrath I provok't, whose commands I
"contradicted, whose servants I reproch't, &c? must I
"now appear before the dreadful tribunal of this Just, this
"Holy, this Inexorable Judge? Is there no hope of escape-
"ing in the crowd, and so avoid a trial? or is there no
"possibility of an excuse, when arraigned before his bar?
"or is there no method to be found to evade the Execution
"of his Terrible Judgment? must I hear, and hear to
"my Confusion, that Epitome of Hell compriz'd into a
"Sentence? *Depart, Depart from me ye cursed into Ever-*
"*lasting Fire*? Oh! what shall I be able to say for my
"self? when my own Conscience brings the charge, and
"reads the Indictment, and I cannot disown or deny
"one Article of what I am accus'd?

All the mercies you have receiv'd from God; all the instructive afflictions you have at any time met with; all the awakening Sermons you have heard, all the motions of *God's Spirit*, and the rebukes of *your own*, which you have resisted, all the calls of his Word, the warnings of his Providence, and the threatnings of his Wrath, which you have slighted; your knowledg of your

danger; your time and ſpace to repent, your former confeſſions of Sin; your convictions of guilt; your purpoſes to reform; the reproofs you have had from others; and the promiſes you have made your ſelves; may all be muſter'd up to your awakn'd thoughts, to ſeize your Souls with horror and confuſion, when you are called by Death to paſs to this Judgment of God.

And now, Chriſtians, 'tis probable you may ſuppoſe and hope that this will never be your caſe; yet the preſent inſtance, of this *Unhappy youth* may convince you that 'tis poſſible, and more than poſſible. For tho' I never ſaw him (to my knowledg) Save on his Death-bed, yet having expreſt his own deſires, that others might take warning by his Example, I need not ſcruple to acquaint you (with what I learn't from himſelf, and is well known to his Surviving companions.) that during his health, he did *put the evil day far from him*: and yet was very apprehenſive of a future Judgment, and concern'd at his own unpreparedneſs, in his laſt Sickneſs; moſt heartily confeſſing, and that with Tears, that he had indulged to youthful Luſts, delighted in wicked company, liv'd in the prophanation of the Sabbath, and made a mock of every thing almoſt that was Serious. And this notwithſtanding the counſels of his Friends, and ſome checks of his own Conſcience: ſadly bemoaning his forlorn ſtate, as having little or no hope to find mercy at the hand of God; and penitently confeſſing his own willfulneſs and folly that procur'd it to himſelf: and thereupon cry'd out in the bitterneſs of his Soul, "Oh! had I believ'd "and known, what now I do; I would have been more "concerned to Secure my Everlaſting Intreſt; I would "have taken more care to avoid Temptation; I would have "imploy'd my Time to better purpoſes: and attended "the miniſtry of the Word in another manner, &c. But

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"I fear 'tis now too late. And then with the greateſt importunity did beg of God to pardon and forgive him, for the ſake of Chriſt; then toſſing from place to place, wringing his hands, and lifting up his eyes to Heaven, (with the affecting vehemence of a deſpairing Soul) did beſeech the aſſiſtance of thoſe about him to ſeek to God on his behalf. "Oh pray for me, pray for me, for Chriſt's ſake "pray for me; That if yet Mercy may be had, the "Lord would take pitty on a miſerable Sinner. O my Sins "are a burden too heavy for me to bear; I have Sin'd "tho' God ſtood by and ſaw me: I have Sin'd tho' my "Conſcience did rebuke me for it; again, I have Sin'd, tho' "I reſolv'd to Sin no more; I know not what to do, or "which way to turn, *&c.* for with ſuch words as theſe did he bewail himſelf, and ſignifie the horrors of an accuſing Conſcience. Nevertheleſs, for the ſupport of his Relations, and the encouragement of all returning Sinners, I am willing to add, That a little before his change (which was ſuddain and unexpected, when his Friends began to entertain ſome hopes of his recovery) his Spirit was more compos'd and calm, his diſtracting Terrors much abated; and the overwhelming fears of Death and Judgment very much ſubdu'd and overcome.

In his confeſſions of ſin, he own'd and aggravated his crimes with the greateſt freedom, with a deep remorſe of Spirit, and an hearty ſerious ſenſe and feeling of what he ſpake. He did not go about to palliate or excuſe his former wickedneſs, to leſſen or diminiſh it, by ſhifting the blame on the ſubtilty of the Devil, the bias and inclination of a bodily Temper, the Corruption of humane nature, or the perſuaſions of *Evil Company*, *&c.* altho' *this laſt* he did very much lament, as the greateſt ſnare to his Soul, and a principal occaſion of his youthful ſins, and apprehended Ruine.

Among other *ſins* which an accuſing Conſcience told him of, *one* that did more particularly affect his heart, and burden his Soul, was the *ſin of Lying*; I mention this, with an unfeigned deſire, that all young Perſons (Apprentices eſpecially) would remember this Example, and reſolve againſt it.

There is *one thing more*, which I named firſt, and would here take notice of, I mean *his Scoffing Humour*; and *this* he acknowledged with a great deal of remorſe and ſhame; that when firſt he was an hearer in this place, he came with a deſign to *droll upon the Sermon*, and *deride the Preacher*: But not meeting with any thing on which to break a Jeſt, or occaſion mirth and laughter, nothing but what was ſerious, becoming the reverence and awfulneſs of holy things, and ſuited to the ſolemn work and ſervice of a Sabbath, he reſolv'd to come again, and accordingly for ſome time did ſo, (I cannot ſay how long) with other thoughts of my Brethren and me, and of the ſerious plainneſs of this our way of worſhip, than his former Ignorance and prejudices would ſuffer him to admit; and thanks be to God *he is not the only Inſtance of this kind.*

Therefore I cannot but ſubjoyn, that as Religion is not the leſs excellent, becauſe ſome Fools deſpiſe it; nor ſin the leſs deſtructive, becauſe there be ſome Atheiſtical Scoffers who make a mock of ſin; neither is plain and ſerious Preaching, (with the purity and ſimplicity of Goſpel-worſhip) any whit the more Contemptible, becauſe ſome that *ſit in the chair of Scorners*, deride and run it down; ſince theſe kind of Scoffers are uſually ſuch as caſt off all thoughts of God and an after-reckoning, and are no way influenc'd by the conſideration of a future Life; to whom *Heaven* and *Hell* are words of *ſport*, and the *Sacred Scripture* matter of *deriſion*.

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For none, methinks, who are ſerious in the practice of Religion, and make a conſcience of their words and actions, ſhould dare to make a mock of the *worſhip* of *God*, or thoſe that joyn therein, whether Miniſters or people: only upon the account of ſome little difference, from that method and way of worſhip, which they like beſt, when the *ſubſtance* and deſign of *both* is apparently the ſame, and believ'd to be ſo. Did men but *underſtand* what they *profeſs* by owning Chriſtianity; did they but *believe* what they *underſtand*; and *practice* what *they* pretend to believe, a meer Reverence and Juſt regard to holy Things, would moſt certainly give a check to this *Scoffing Humour*, in reference to thoſe who cannot in all reſpects conform to their meaſures.

6. Laſtly, *Conſider the dreadfulneſs and the Terror of this final Judgment, in its ſelf, and its certain and immediate Conſequences to every unprepared ſinner, whether young or old.*

When the *bleſſed Jeſus* ſhall be revealed from Heaven, with his mighty Angels, to take the Throne by his Father's order, and Judge the World in righteouſneſs; when *he* that ſtoop'd from Heaven to Earth, to be a ſacrifice for ſin; that watcht, and pray'd, and ſweat drops of blood for you and me; that endured the Contradiction of ſinners againſt himſelf, in the days of his fleſh; ſuffer'd the Cruelty of men, and the Wrath of his Father, and the Curſed Death of the Croſs, upon our account; ſhall come again as the Judge of quick and dead; we ſhall then have other thoughts of him and of our ſelves, than now we entertain.

Sirs, he *now* offers you a pardon, as the purchaſe of his Death, on eaſy, honourable, and advantageous terms; But it will be *then* too late, and in vain to beg it. He *now* warns you of your danger, and tells you, that the end of youthful luſts, is Death, and Judgement, and eternal Wrath. And *then* you ſhall know that he ſpake in earneſt, and his words were true. *Now* as a merciful Redeemer

deemer, he entreats you to be reconcil'd; he ſhall *then* be clothed with vengeance, and appear, to your confuſion, as a Terrible Judge.

At firſt he came in the form of a Servant, to make our Peace with God, and was thereupon deſpiſed and rejected of men. But he *ſhall* ſhortly *come again*, to render vengeance to thoſe, that would not know him as a Prince and a Prophet, receive his meſſage, and yeild obedience to his Holy Goſpel. *Now* he offers life, eternal life, and begs your acceptance of it: but he will *then* revenge your ungrateful refuſal of his offered mercy. *Now* he entreats you to be happy, and have compaſſion on your ſelves: But *then* he will be as deaf to *your entreaties*, as you have been to *his*; and that, though you ſhould urge him with the greateſt importunity poſſible, though you beſeech him by the mercifulneſs of his Nature, by the freeneſs of his Invitation, by the Compaſſion of his Death, by the merit of his ſufferings, by the kindneſs of his Sacrifice, by the Grace of his Goſpel, *&c.* *Now* you will not believe his *promiſes*; but *then* you ſhall experience the execution of his *Threatnings*. *Now* you *will not hearken* to his advice and warning, but you *ſhall ſhortly feel* the ſad effects of your contempt and obſtinacy. *Now* you will not be conſtrained by his dying love; but ere long you ſhall know the power of his wrath, whether you will or no; for though at preſent he offer you life; yet upon your refuſal, he will ſhortly pronounce the Sentence of Eternal Death; *as yet he* Invites you to him, but *then* he will bid you depart. *Depart from me, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels.*

From that *God*, after whoſe Image you were Created, from that *Saviour*, who redeemed you by his blood, and from that *Holy Spirit* who would have ſanctified you by his Grace.

Depart

Depart from me, and all hopes of Salvation by me. *From me*, and all the bleſſed Company of Saints and Angels, that ſhall live with me for ever.

Depart from me, abandoned to an everlaſting curſe, (of which both Souls and bodies ſhall be the wretched unhappy Subjects) into *Inquiſite Torments* ſet forth by fire, and *ſuch* as were originally deſign'd for the *Apoſtate Spirits*, of *whom* the Scripture doth ſuppoſe one to be the principal Ring leader of all the reſt, and who are therefore termed his Angels.

They who tempted you to Sin, ſhall deride your folly, and triumph in your Ruin; and be your Conſtant perpetual Tormentors, ſince the *fire is unquenchable, and never goeth out*.

Nevertheleſs, how dreadful ſoever this Sentence muſt needs be, it is not more intolerable in it ſelf, than unavoidable to the Sinner: For where will you hide from his Alſeeing eye? or how will you reſiſt the force of his Almighty arm? as it will be in vain to think of ſupporting his wrath: ſo every whit as vain to Imagine a poſſibility of eſcaping it. Will the tears of a deſparing Sinner extinguiſh the fire of Gods wrath, and quench the flames of Hell? will his wiſhing he had been wiſer, in the leaſt avail, when the Charge is proved, and the Sentence paſt? whither would you flee from the juſtice of the judge? whither? but to the mercy of a Saviour? But *this Saviour* is now the *Judge*, and become your *Enemy*: A ſight of *whom* ſhall awaken the moſt ſlumbering Conſcience, and make the never-dying worm gnaw your very heart: when it ſhall mind you of the calls and invitations you refuſed, and the warnings you ſlighted, revive the convictons you ſtifled, and remember you of the vows you broke, and force you to reflect on the vanities of your youth, and ſadly look back on the time paſt of your ignorance and folly.

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When for a light temptation, you run the hazard of this heavy punishment; when for a temporal pleasure you ventured an endless Torment; for a mixt delight, an unmixed pain; for a momentary satisfaction, an eternal Wrath; for a short Sin, an everlasting Sorrow. O *Eternity*! *Eternity*! is it true, or rather can it possibly be false, that after millions of ages, under the wrath of God, it will not then be past the beginning of Sorrows, but an everlasting vengeance will be yet to come, and will ever be to come. O curst be my wicked Companions that inticed me to Sin, and so to ruine; or rather, Curst be my own stupidity and folly, that I would not be perswaded to believe what now I know and feel. Oh that I were now on Earth again, and had the benefit of one months space, in order to a second trial! Oh that I had never seen the light, or that the Earth had open'd and and swallowed me up in my Cradle! or rather, Oh that in *time* I had received instruction, and harkened to reproof; that in *time* I had believed what *I was* told so plainly, and warned of so Faithfully, concerning God and his Righteous Judgment.

Now that this may never be the case of any one of us, let me conclude with the advice of the Prophet, Jer. 13. 16. *Give Glory to the Lord your God, before he cause darkness, and before your feet stumble upon the dark mountains, and while ye look for light, he turn it into the shadow of Death, and make it gross darkness.*

FINIS.